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United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2435 (2018) by which the Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and requested me to report on its activities every 90 days. The report covers the period from 26 September to 26 December 2018.

II. Major developments

2. During the reporting period, the President, Iván Duque Márquez completed the first 100 days of his government, having made repeated commitments to continue the peace process within the framework of a broader governing agenda of equity, legality and entrepreneurship. He also reiterated previously stated intentions to secure a national consensus on certain modifications to the Peace Agreement. On 11 October, the President visited one of the territorial areas for training and reintegration where former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army (FARC-EP) are carrying out reintegration activities, in Pondores, La Guajira department. He noted that the visit was intended to affirm his Government's intention to support the Peace Agreement and those committed to returning to civilian life. On 11 November, at the Paris Peace Forum, the President reiterated his support to advancing the peace process, noting that his Government had requested the international community to enhance the viability of reintegration projects, advance rural development and monitor Government efforts to consolidate peace in Colombia.

3. The bilateral bodies to promote peace implementation, comprising the Government and the People's Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) – the National Reintegration Council, the Technical Committee on Security and Protection and the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement – continued to meet regularly with the participation of the High Counsellor for Post-Conflict, Emilio José Archila; the High Commissioner for Peace, Miguel Ceballos; and the Minister of the Interior, Nancy Gutiérrez.

4. On 24 November, Colombians marked the two-year anniversary of the signing of the Final Peace Agreement. In a statement, I urged a concerted effort to consolidate the considerable gains of peace and reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations to support such efforts. That message was underscored by the Under-Secretary-

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General for Political Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo, during her visit to Colombia from 3 to 5 December.

5. On 17 December, the High Counsellor for Post-Conflict unveiled a plan entitled "Peace with legality", the aim of which is to stabilize the areas most affected by conflict. It takes, as a point of departure, the 16 subregions and 170 municipalities where it is expected that the implementation of development programmes with a territorial focus will begin in 2019 under the coordination of Mr. Archila's office. The Government's goal under the "Peace with legality" plan, according to Mr. Archila, "is to eradicate violence from the places that have endured it for decades. It is a phenomenon that has affected the whole country, which has threatened the entire society and has been linked to human rights violations, killings, drug trafficking and poverty. It is a matter of justice and of national security."

6. The aim of the plan, which has a 15-year time horizon, is to better coordinate multiple initiatives within and beyond the Peace Agreement, including rural development, commitments to former FARC-EP members in the reintegration process, commitments to families under the voluntary substitution programme and, in particular, commitments to victims. It announces new initiatives to extend roads and electricity to rural areas as critical aspects of a stabilization effort. The aim is to coordinate not only multiple programmes but also multiple actors, including the Government, regional authorities, the international community, the private sector and affected communities.

7. Mr. Archila, in addition to his responsibility to take forward the socioeconomic reintegration and security of former FARC-EP members, has focused on comprehensive rural development, including development programmes with a territorial approach, a key feature of the Peace Agreement. To date, 13 of 16 such programmes across 170 municipalities have been finalized and are scheduled to begin implementation in 2019.

Congressional developments

8. Several peace-related bills were introduced in the first session of Congress, which ended on 19 December, relating to the legislative agenda of the Peace Agreement. A bill to create 16 special transitional electoral districts for peace was reintroduced this session but, for the second time, failed to garner sufficient support. A Government bill on political reform, another commitment under the Peace Agreement, was introduced and will continue to be considered in the next session. Other bills that would have altered provisions of the Peace Agreement were debated in the first session: some of them were not approved, while others will continue to be considered during the next session.

9. The peace commissions of both houses played an increasingly active role, serving as an important channel between Congress, public institutions and key constituencies concerned by the peace process, including victims and former combatants in the process of reintegration. During the reporting period, members of the Peace Commissions visited six territorial areas for training and reintegration, as well as smaller settlements of former combatants and met with local authorities and communities affected by violence and insecurity in Antioquia, Caquetá, Cauca, Guaviare, Norte de Santander, Putumayo and Tolima. At the initiative of the Peace Commissions, Congress, Government and judicial and oversight institutions met to enhance their cooperation with new transitional justice institutions and, in particular, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition

10. The Commission on Truth, Coexistence and Non-repetition (Truth Commission) was inaugurated on 29 November, marking the start of its three-year mandate to promote understanding of events that occurred during the armed conflict, acknowledgment of responsibility and reconciliation. It will now begin in earnest what its chair, Francisco de Roux, has called the "painful but necessary" process of acknowledging the truth, a process distinct from judicial determinations made by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and other bodies. The Commission plans to open 23 offices in 10 regions of the country and to reach out to Colombians abroad.

11. On 5 October, a joint statement by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Colombia stressed the central role of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace within the country's peace process and the need for all public entities to fully respect its independence and autonomy. That statement came on the heels of an incident on 4 October in which investigators from the office of the Attorney General entered the premises of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, removed copies of the files on kidnappings by the former FARC-EP and sought to interview magistrates in connection with the case. Some weeks later, the Attorney General asked the Constitutional Court to clarify which institution has authority over former FARC-EP goods and assets, an issue with implications for reparations for victims and for legal guarantees extended to former FARC-EP members. A ruling of the Court is still pending. While the Attorney General, Néstor Humberto Martínez, and the President of the Special Jurisdiction, Patricia Linares, announced on 30 October an agreement to improve the exchange of information and the collaboration between the two institutions, continued efforts are required to ensure effective cooperation.

12. During the reporting period, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace continued to hold hearings on case 001 on kidnappings by FARC-EP and received testimony from prominent individuals kidnapped and held by the former FARC-EP, some for more than a decade. As part of its deliberations, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace required 31 members of the former FARC-EP command to submit individual or collective reports outlining how they were meeting their obligations under the Peace Agreement, including the requirement to contribute to the reintegration process. All but one senior former FARC-EP commander, Hernán Darío Velasquez, alias *El Paisa*, met that requirement. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has initiated a procedure to locate him and define his contributions to the peace process, among other aspects.

13. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace continues to review the requests of individuals petitioning to come under its authority. As at 5 October, 13,271 people have signed agreements subjecting themselves to the authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, among them 1,923 members of the public security forces, 11,303 former FARC-EP members, 33 public officials and 12 people involved in arrests linked to social protests. Organizations continue to submit reports to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, including, during the reporting period, two reports on enforced disappearance allegedly committed by former FARC-EP members and State officials, two reports on alleged kidnappings by FARC-EP, a report on alleged crimes committed against members of the public security forces and a report on alleged multiple crimes by the armed forces, affecting more than 17,000 victims.

14. The United Nations system, at the request of the Government, continues to provide important technical and operational support to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Truth Commission and the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing.

Reconciliation

15. On 11 December, the National Council for Peace and Reconciliation met, with the participation of President Duque. The National Council and its 15 departmental and 78 municipal peace councils include representatives from a broad array of sectors. The President pledged his support to reconciliation efforts. It is hoped that, through the growing activities of this Council and the start of the nationwide deployment of the Truth Commission, reconciliation efforts are entering a new phase in Colombia.

16. The Mission and some United Nations agencies have worked with local peace councils, local authorities, FARC and civil society to support reconciliation initiatives linked to reintegration. During the reporting period, activities focused on social dialogue, involving victims, youth, women, community leaders and FARC, have been organized near six territorial areas for training and reintegration.

17. On 10 December, as provided for in the Peace Agreement, a monument made from weapons laid down by former combatants was unveiled in Bogotá.

Substitution of illicit crops

18. Success in reducing violence and insecurity for communities in the former conflict areas is inextricably linked to success in combating the illegal economies that have long fuelled such violence and insecurity. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that, as at 7 December 2018, 99,096 families have signed up for the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops under item 4 of the Peace Agreement. Approximately 32,929 hectares of coca have been eradicated voluntarily out of 51,721 hectares registered by those families. The voluntary eradication rate remains high: approximately 92 per cent of the families who received the initial financial benefits from the programme have eradicated their crops.

19. On 9 November, the Government presented a road map to reorganize the National Comprehensive Programme and announced its decision to reinitiate payments to families which had been frozen since August 2018. In December 2018, payments to 27,000 families were resumed and, in January 2019, payments to an additional 26,000 families are expected. It will be important to ensure that commitments to families are upheld, in the context of the Government's new anti-drug approach and the comprehensive "Peace with legality" plan.

20. Colombia, with about 70 per cent of global coca cultivation, faces a major challenge. UNODC reported that, by the end of 2017, 171,000 hectares of coca were being grown in the country. The Government, which estimated that the illicit drug economy represented 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, launched its new anti-drug policy on 13 December 2018. The strategy is focused on efforts to reduce the cultivation of illicit crops through alternative development, substitution and eradication, as well as efforts to reduce consumption and to disrupt organized criminal groups and money-laundering. A number of territorial areas for training and reintegration are located in regions where there are significant amounts of illicit crops – mainly coca.

Dialogue between the Government and the National Liberation Army

21. With regard to dialogue with the National Liberation Army (ELN), President Duque has maintained the position adopted upon completion of the 30-day review undertaken after his inauguration on 7 August, namely that the release by ELN of all kidnapped individuals and the cessation of criminal activities is a precondition for the resumption of dialogue. For its part, ELN has stated its openness to discussing all issues but rejected any preconditions for the resumption of talks. While the positions

of the two sides are further apart today than they have been since the start of public discussions in 2016, it is very important that channels of communications remain open. It is also essential that, while military operations continue, the protection of communities affected by the conflict is paramount.

III. Mission tasks

A. Reintegration

Socioeconomic and political reintegration

22. The work of the National Reintegration Council resumed in September 2018. The High Counsellor for Post-Conflict and the Director of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization are working closely with FARC representatives to focus the Council on its role as a high-level executive and strategic body, with the aim of taking forward an implementation road map in line with the National Policy on Reintegration for Former Members of FARC-EP including income-generating activities, land, food distribution and health. It is important that the National Reintegration Council build on the road map for implementation of 16 gender-related actions of the National Council on Economic and Social Policy prepared by its Gender Working Group and the Presidential Office for Women's Affairs.

23. In parallel with those efforts to enhance national policies and provide strategic direction, it is crucial that reintegration efforts advance at the regional and local levels. The active engagement of regional authorities and the alignment of reintegration programmes with regional and community-based approaches will be essential ingredients of success.

24. Governors have now established departmental reintegration boards in the departments of Antioquia, Chocó, Cauca, Meta, Santander, Sucre and Valle del Cauca, with additional initiatives under way in Atlántico and Bolívar. The boards have brought regional and local authorities, the private sector, universities and civil society organizations closer to the reintegration process. They foster the inclusion of reintegration requirements in regional and municipal development plans and the adaptation of national strategies to regional contexts. As provided for in the "Peace with legality" plan, sustainable peace in former conflict areas depends on the linking of the reintegration plans to development programmes with a territorial focus, to the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops and to rural reform.

25. On 29 and 30 November, a subregional meeting on reintegration was held in the city of Villavicencio, Meta. The event brought together over 40 FARC leaders from eight territorial areas for training and reintegration and three new settlements from five departments; they interacted directly with the High Counsellor for Post-Conflict, the Director of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and the Governor of Meta, as well as with the President of the FARC party. The meeting, which could be replicated in other regions, helped to establish a direct channel of communications between former FARC-EP members and the local, regional and national institutions in charge of the reintegration process.

26. The community-based approach to reintegration is one of the pillars of the National Policy on Reintegration for Former Members of FARC-EP and could foster reconciliation in the regions. The reintegration process could be strengthened if linked with the activities of the local and regional peace councils, as well as the Truth Commission.

The situation of territorial areas for training and reintegration and new settlements

27. The situation across the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration varies considerably. According to an analysis by the Mission, six territorial areas for training and reintegration (Agua Bonita, Colinas, La Fila, La Reforma, Llano Grande and Pondores) have satisfactory levels of services, security and economic activity. Twelve territorial areas for training and reintegration have less than satisfactory conditions or face moderate levels of risk, and six are assessed as inadequate. During the past two months, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization has undertaken a number of improvements to address some of those identified shortfalls.

28. The territorial areas for training and reintegration and the provision of the monthly allowance on which former combatants depend currently extend to 15 August 2019. In the coming weeks, the National Reintegration Council is expected to discuss the post-15 August options, including the possible progressive conversion of some territorial areas for training and reintegration into regular units of the territorial administration. For its part, FARC has expressed the view that the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration offer the best prospect for long-term, sustainable reintegration.

29. It will be important to ensure that any decision taken in that regard is informed by a full understanding of the conditions across the various territorial areas for training and reintegration, as well as other rural and urban settlements, given in particular the marked delays in productive reintegration in the past two years. The decision to close the territorial area for training and reintegration of Vidri, Chocó, made in April 2018 without considering all the ramifications, had a very negative impact on the reintegration and security of former combatants. Similarly, decisions on the provision of the monthly allowance after August 2019 should take into consideration the degree to which former members of FARC-EP have access to adequate and sustainable alternative sources of income. Distribution of food will continue to be required beyond 31 December 2018.

30. Two additional issues pending discussion by the National Reintegration Council are vital for the thousands of former combatants living outside the territorial areas for training and reintegration: (a) clarity on the legal status and services to be made available for many new settlements in rural areas where many former combatants relocated in search of better living conditions and economic prospects; and (b) a strategy for the reintegration of former FARC-EP members in urban areas.

Economic and social reintegration

31. During the reporting period, three new collective income-generating projects were approved, and 12 of the 17 projects previously approved by the National Reintegration Council passed a technical clearance process, bringing to 20 the total number of approved collective projects. In addition, 29 individual projects have been approved. Together, the projects are valued at $3.7 million and will benefit 1,340 former combatants (including 366 women). To date, funds have been disbursed for seven of the collective projects and all 29 individual projects, benefiting approximately 335 former combatants.

32. It is particularly important to assure that all the projects include elements of sustainability. Some key elements to take into account are the strengthening of the technical capacities of cooperatives, access to lands and markets and the effective inclusion of a gender approach for the economic empowerment of women.

33. As indicated in previous reports, independently of productive projects presented to the National Reintegration Council, former combatants have utilized portions of

their monthly allowances or received some external funding to initiate their own small-scale productive activities. The Mission has been able to identify 294 productive initiatives in 23 territorial areas for training and reintegration and 13 new settlements. Most initiatives (190) are self-funded and include agricultural crops, fisheries, cattle, textiles, wood transformation, trade and ecotourism.

34. Private sector foundations and businesses are contributing to productive activities and community-based reintegration. For example, in the territorial area for training and reintegration of Llano Grande, in Antioquia department, 14 private sector foundations are collectively supporting investments in business start-ups, apprenticeships, schools and cultural activities.

35. The United Nations post-conflict multi-partner trust fund for Colombia is supporting 15 productive projects implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In the territorial areas for training and reintegration of Pondores, La Guajira, and San José de Oriente, Cesar, products are sold to the school-feeding programme with support from the World Food Programme (WFP). The European Union Trust Fund for Peace in Colombia is funding several projects and recently announced an additional contribution of 15 million euros for reintegration.

36. Access to land goes to the heart of effective reintegration. The National Reintegration Council authorized the National Land Agency to acquire six plots for productive projects in July 2018; only one has been purchased in the territorial area for training and reintegration of Colinas, San José del Guaviare. The legal channels, including access to landownership as established in Decree No. 756 of 4 May 2018, have been defined and need to be effectively utilized.

37. With regard to the differentiated requirements of ethnic communities, the National Reintegration Council authorized financing for a productive project in the Tumburao indigenous reservation of Cauca department. The aim of the initiative is to cultivate avocados through a FARC-led cooperative that gathers together 240 former FARC-EP combatants from the territorial area for training and reintegration Los Monos, benefiting the surrounding indigenous communities of Caldono municipality.

38. Ensuring the continued provision of basic services, in particular health services but also education and housing, remain of high concern among the former combatants living in territorial areas for training and reintegration and, in particular, the new settlements situated in rural remote areas. It is hoped that the National Reintegration Council will extend beyond August 2019 most, if not all, of the medical facilities available in some territorial areas for training and reintegration which also, in these remote areas, benefit nearby communities. While nearly 93 per cent of accredited former combatants have health insurance, access to health care providers remains a serious challenge. Special attention must be given to pregnant and lactating women, to the approximately 800 children now living in territorial areas for training and reintegration and new settlements and to former combatants with disabilities.

39. An important education initiative, "Arando la Educación", currently has cofinancing from the Ministry of Education and Norway until April 2019. Through the initiative, 477 FARC members earned their high school diplomas and 5,668 beneficiaries, including community members, have been able to access adult education programmes. The National Reintegration Council has held initial discussions on subsequent education support, but the definition of a future strategy to ensure access to education is still pending.

Political reintegration

40. The seats initially allocated to FARC members Seuxis Paucias Hernández Solarte (Jesús Santrich) and Iván Márquez in the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, respectively, have been under review by the Council of State. On 12 December, a court upheld the right of the FARC party to appoint an interim replacement for the seat of Mr. Santrich in the Chamber of Representatives. The second on the FARC list for Atlántico department has been sworn in. Action is pending with regard to the Senate seat.

41. Accordingly, the FARC party is now occupying 9 of its 10 seats in Congress, 5 in the Chamber of Representatives and 4 in the Senate, where it is participating actively in plenary debates and in the constitutional, legal and peace commissions in both chambers.

42. The FARC party will participate for the first time in regional and local elections in 2019. Preparations are already under way. The Government has undertaken to develop, well ahead of the elections, a plan to provide adequate security to FARC candidates and party members. The FARC Gender Committee is holding a series of regional retreats with women of FARC to strengthen women's political role, the first of which covered the Caribbean region.

B. Legal guarantees

43. Despite regular meetings among the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC representatives and the Mission, progress remained limited in resolving the many challenges in the area of legal guarantees.

44. The completion of the accreditation process has been addressed as a priority. To date, approximately 13,049 former FARC-EP members have been accredited by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and 12,814 of those individuals have been located and notified of their accreditation. The FARC and the Office of the High Commissioner have consolidated a common list of those former FARC-EP members who still need to be accredited with a view to proceeding, at a faster pace, with the accreditation and notification process.

45. The total number of accredited former FARC-EP members who remain in prison is 16. Furthermore, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and FARC, with support from the Mission, are working on the cases of 254 former FARC-EP members, most of them still in jail, whose accreditation remains under review.

46. There is no progress in the possible consideration of a list of approximately 1,000 former FARC-EP members whose names were submitted by the FARC to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace on 10 August 2018 and not included in previous lists.

47. In the reporting period, the Independent System for Advice and Defence of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has been staffed with four lawyers for victims, eight lawyers for former FARC-EP members and one lawyer for military members; it also includes 17 lawyers exclusively providing legal advice but not representation and 9 specialists in psychosocial assistance for former FARC-EP members. In the light of the importance of due process, the Mission views with concern the modest number of lawyers contracted to date and supports plans to substantially reinforce the Independent System in the future.

48. The Mission notes with concern a number of actions during the reporting period that are contributing to a growing sense of legal uncertainty on the part of former FARC-EP members, which is detrimental to the peace process. An amendment was

initially adopted but then defeated in the House that would have given the Government the authority to reactivate arrest warrants against former FARC-EP members. There have been several instances of imprisonment of former FARC-EP members owing to the absence of a prompt definition of their legal situation.

49. In the case of Jesús Santrich, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has reaffirmed its prerogative as constitutional judge to be able to request the evidence that it considers necessary to fulfil its mandate. The Special Jurisdiction has indicated that it will take a decision on the applicability of the no-extradition guarantee to Mr. Santrich in early February 2019. The outcome of the case will have important implications for the real and perceived legal guarantees.

C. Security guarantees

Key mechanisms and platforms

50. Most of the mechanisms under section 3.4 of the Peace Agreement have been created, albeit not fully implemented. Key entities in charge of prevention, protection and investigation are up and running: the early warning system of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Specialized Subdirectorate for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit, the Technical Committee on Security and Protection and the Special Investigation Unit of the Office of the Attorney General. However, to effectively meet current challenges regarding security guarantees for both former FARC-EP members and communities, it is important that key bodies in charge of the implementation of security guarantees under section 3.4 operate with a focus on more effective inter-institutional coordination in the field.

51. I noted in my July 2018 report that the National Commission on Security Guarantees has provided a valuable platform for dialogue and confidence building between civil society and State actors. I therefore urge that it be reconvened together with its subcommission and working groups.

Security of former members of FARC-EP

52. Military and police forces continue to provide perimeter security for territorial areas for training and reintegration and surrounding areas. Because of such efforts, no major security incidents have been reported in territorial areas for training and reintegration in the past three months. However, significant challenges remain for security in the new settlements of former FARC-EP in the process of reintegration outside the territorial areas for training and reintegration, many of which are in areas with a strong presence of illegal armed groups and criminal organizations. Security in those places remains a source of concern and could represent a major challenge for the exercise of political rights in the regional and local elections in October 2019.

53. Additionally, the Mission observes a need for more women among deployed security personal and increased gender training to mitigate and respond to women's specific security risks in the territories.

54. Since the appointment of Mr. Archila as High Counsellor for Post-Conflict and Presidential delegate for Security Guarantees, the Technical Committee on Security and Protection has met regularly and is functioning effectively. As a result, 36 protection measures have been approved, and a protection plan for former combatants is being prepared for the upcoming regional and local elections.

55. To address risks in territories where the reintegration of former FARC-EP members is taking place, three regional workshops were held with former FARC-EP members, the Specialized Subdirectorate for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, the Special

Investigation Unit and the Mission. The events helped to identify prevention, protection and mitigation measures, in line with guarantees for the political activity of the FARC political party.

56. The Tripartite Protection and Security Mechanism continues to have an important role in building trust between the Specialized Subdirectorate for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit, the National Police Unit for Peacebuilding, the military and the Mission. The Mechanism functions at the national, regional and local levels to coordinate and monitor protection measures for former FARC-EP members. During the reporting period, the Mechanism visited several territorial areas for training and reintegration, accompanied by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and the Special Investigation Unit, to support the functioning of the local mechanisms, identify security shortfalls and receive feedback on security plans for the upcoming local elections. While the tripartite mechanism is well established in the territorial areas for training and reintegration, it should adapt its protection strategies to support the reintegration of ex-combatants in new settlements beyond those areas.

57. During the reporting period, 14 former FARC-EP members were killed, bringing to 85 the number since the signing of the Peace Agreement in November 2016. The most affected departments continue to be Antioquia, Caquetá, Cauca, Nariño and Norte de Santander. Out of a total of 87 cases, including the 85 killings, the Special Investigation Unit reports significant advances in 48 cases. Sentences have been issued in 3 cases; 8 are at the prosecution stage, 17 are under investigation, including arrests, 18 are under investigation with pending arrests, and 2 are at other stages of investigation. To date, a total of 27 persons have been detained in connection with attacks against former FARC-EP members.

58. According to the Special Investigation Unit, the main actors behind the attacks are illegal armed groups and criminal organizations. Out of the 48 cases showing significant progress, 36 are linked to the *Clan del Golfo*, ELN, dissident FARC-EP groups and the Ejército Popular de Liberación.

59. A round table on the investigation of attacks against former FARC-EP members has been established with the Specialized Subdirectorate for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit, the Special Investigation Unit, the FARC party and the Mission. During the reporting period, significant progress was made in implementing methodologies to monitor and analyse cases, with a focus on regional dynamics. The results from the Special Investigation Unit confirm that it is crucial to gain a better understanding of the specific security issues in and around certain territorial areas for training and reintegration. To that end, the tripartite round table has held working sessions in two regions (Cauca and Nariño) to monitor the progress made by criminal investigations, identify local threats and prompt rapid response by State institutions.

Security guarantees for communities, human rights defenders and social leaders

60. I remain greatly concerned that attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders continued to occur with impunity during the reporting period. According to OHCHR in Colombia, seven killings have been verified since September 2018 and another 22 cases are in the process of verification. According to OHCHR reports, since the signing of the Peace Agreement in November 2016, 163 killings of social leaders and human rights defenders have been verified and a total of 454 cases reported.[1] These killings are largely concentrated in three departments: Cauca, Norte

[1] Situación de defensores y defensoras de derechos humanos, 2018, 27 November 2018, OHCHR in Colombia.

de Santander and Antioquia. The majority of the killings occurred in areas vacated by the former FARC-EP and where there is a limited presence of the State.

61. The situation of indigenous leaders in Colombia warrants special attention. Indigenous communities have seen a serious increase in the number of killings, threats, cases of confinement, forced displacement and forced recruitment.

62. As noted in my previous report the President instructed the Ministry of the Interior to urgently formulate a comprehensive policy on prevention and protection of social leaders and human rights defenders, in follow-up to the national pact for life and for the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders, signed by the Government, regional authorities and civil society organizations in August. On 19 November, President Duque signed by decree the Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, involving three key dimensions: institutional redesign within the Executive Branch, territorial coordination of government agencies and communication strategies. The situation in the Department of Cauca alone, where in only three municipalities 11 killings have taken place since early November, illustrates the critical importance of the effective implementation of the plan in those areas of the country affected by continued violence.

63. The implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for the Security of Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders is equally important. The Ombudsman's Office, the Office of the Attorney General, women's organizations, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Mission have supported the implementation of the Programme in Putumayo Department and the Montes de María region through a permanent forum responsible for monitoring women's security and protection.

Early warnings by the Office of the Ombudsman

64. During the reporting period, the Office of the Ombudsman issued nine early warnings, outlining risks to individuals and communities in six departments and 20 municipalities. A total of 86 early warnings were issued in 2018. Eight meetings of the Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings were held to follow up on the institutions' response to identified risks, with the participation of the main local authorities and the Mission. Early warnings continue to highlight the risks resulting from violent actors targeting communities and leaders, including those seeking to obtain income derived from drug trafficking, mining, extortion, levies and fuel smuggling, among other things, and competing over areas used as corridors for the transport of illicit goods. Early warnings have also highlighted that the victims are typically persons involved in activities such as: defending land and natural resources; implementing parts of the Peace Agreement, in particular the coca substitution programme and the formulation of rural development plans; land restitution and the return of displaced persons; defending their land against private interests; denouncing drug traffickers, illegal armed actors and the use of children and adolescents in marginalized urban areas; protesting against specific investments of public resources; and political participation.

D. Cross-cutting issues

Gender mainstreaming and engagement with women's groups

65. During the reporting period, there was modest progress regarding the implementation of the gender provisions of the Peace Agreement relating to reintegration and security guarantees. In November 2018, the international verification component for gender established in the Peace Agreement – composed of

UN-Women, Sweden and the Women's International Democratic Federation through the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies – presented its first progress report. It expressed concern over the pace of reintegration of female former combatants and security guarantees for women leaders and human rights defenders.

66. The report was presented to Vice-President, Marta Lucía Ramírez, and the High Counsellor for Post-Conflict, who undertook to examine which aspects could be taken forward by the Government in the coming months. The Government's high-level forum on gender, charged with implementing the gender provisions, will convene early in 2019.

67. Women in territorial areas for training and reintegration and new settlements continue to organize and develop their own projects. To date the Mission has identified over 20 initiatives that could, with additional support, provide an opportunity for women to advance their economic empowerment. The gender technical working group of the National Reintegration Council continued to play an important role in promoting gender-sensitive reintegration. The National Development Plan, through its chapter on women's equality, offers an opportunity to prioritize reintegration of female former combatants as part of its action plan.

Ethnic developments

68. Security in ethnic territories remains of great concern. In recent weeks, there have been multiple killings, affecting in particular the Awá, Embera Chamí and Nasa peoples in the departments of Caldas, Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Valle del Cauca.

69. Regarding the reintegration of ex-combatants of ethnic origin, the Ministry of the Interior, the Victims Unit and the Mission have been supporting traditional authorities and cooperatives, in particular, to overcome differences between ex-combatants and ethnic authorities.

Child protection

70. Under the leadership of the Presidential Counsellor for Human Rights, Francisco Barbosa and the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, the Government continued to implement its reintegration programme, "A different path of life", for 124 individuals who were separated from the FARC-EP as children during 2016 and 2017 (most of whom are now over the age of 18). As of 6 December, 101 of them were participating in programmes of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, and 23 were still under protection measures from the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. Of these 124 persons, 74 received reparation as victims. The programme should be provided with a clearer legal basis so as to ensure adequate resources.

71. The Mission has been monitoring directly 31 cases of children included in the programme "A different path of life". It confirmed that most of them are receiving reintegration benefits such as monthly allowances. In all cases, reparation for victims was approved, but some are still awaiting payment.

72. In October, the FARC National Political Council stated in a communiqué that it had identified new cases of adolescents who needed to begin their reintegration process. The National Reintegration Council should include those new cases within the reintegration programme as soon as possible.

73. No major progress was made regarding day-care facilities for the many children of former combatants living in the territorial areas for training and reintegration. Only three day-care facilities were functioning in the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration: two with support from the Family Welfare Institute and one with funding from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Additional funds would

be available for new day-care facilities upon approval of support from the Peacebuilding Fund.

74. Despite initiatives by IOM, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Action Against Hunger, the provision of preventive health, education, recreational and cultural activities for children remains an urgent challenge. A protocol for former combatants, in particular women, trying to normalize the legal guardianship of their sons and daughters is still pending.

Youth

75. The Mission has continued to strengthen dialogue with youth organizations and leaders at the national, departmental and local levels. To date, the Mission has facilitated visits of youth leaders, young entrepreneurs and university students to seven territorial areas for training and reintegration in five departments to observe productive projects and engage with former combatants and the surrounding communities, including a first-time visit by departmental representatives of the youth wings of six political parties from across the political spectrum to the territorial area for training and reintegration in Caldono, Cauca department.

Liaison and outreach

76. During the reporting period, the Mission has worked closely with Government officials and institutions as they implement the new Government's vision in areas of the Mission's mandate, in particular the High Counsellor for Post-Conflict, the High Commissioner for Peace, the Ministry of the Interior and the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization.

77. The Mission has worked increasingly with members of the Senate and House Peace Commissions, as well as various political parties, as their engagement with peace implementation has expanded. Visits by representatives of Congress to territorial areas for training and reintegration and conflict-affected zones have provided legislators with first-hand information on reintegration and security guarantees while conveying to communities and former combatants their support to the peace process.

78. The Mission held regional press events in five cities – Cúcuta, Medellín, Quibdó, Valledupar and Villavicencio – on the occasion of the second anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement and aimed at highlighting achievements and improving understanding of the role of the Mission. Also, on the second anniversary, in addition to my statement, my Special Representative for Colombia and Head of Mission, Jean Arnault, issued a joint statement with the Special Envoy of the European Union for the Peace Process in Colombia highlighting progress and challenges to date.

79. The Mission continues to maintain regular outreach to churches, women's platforms, ethnic associations, research institutes and a wide representation of civil society organizations in support of its verification activities at the national and subnational levels. The private sector, regional universities and youth organizations also took on expanded roles in reintegration and reconciliation efforts.

80. The Mission continued to meet regularly with international actors represented in Colombia, including members of the Security Council and the 17 countries currently contributing military or police observers. The observers serve as a tangible expression of the support of their countries to the peace process and to the United Nations.

E. Coordination with the United Nations country team

81. The Mission continues to work closely with agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system on matters that relate to their mandates, including through the liaison efforts of the Mission's gender, child protection and ethnic affairs advisers and United Nations country team-Mission joint thematic working groups on reintegration and security guarantees. During the reporting period, coordination expanded on youth and ethnic issues as well.

82. The United Nations country team, the Mission and relevant institutions continued to coordinate efforts in support of the reintegration process. UNDP and IOM will co-finance the 17 projects recently approved by the National Reintegration Council. The United Nations multi-partner trust fund has allocated $11.1 million to socioeconomic reintegration, in addition to bilateral support. The fund has been renewed until December 2022, with reintegration among its three priorities. In December, the Peacebuilding Fund approved $3 million for a programme to support social and economic aspects of reintegration to be implemented by UNDP, UN-Women and UNICEF.

83. With extrabudgetary financing from the Department of Political Affairs and other bilateral contributions, the Mission and UNDP continue to support 47 self-started income-generating projects for former combatants, of which nine are led by women and five are implemented in urban settlements. The funds are allocated through tripartite consultations between the Government, FARC and the United Nations at the national and local levels.

84. In coordination with the Mission and the Government, WFP, IOM, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Mine Action Service and UN-Women are providing technical assistance across 25 territorial areas for training and reintegration, including training for humanitarian demining, technical assistance for agricultural projects, facilitating access to markets and ensuring a gender equality approach. UNICEF is also coordinating actions with the Mission and the Government to ensure that young ex-combatants and community members have adequate opportunities.

85. With regard to security guarantees, the Mission and United Nations agencies met representatives of the Government to explore specific actions to take forward the Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. The Mission and the country team have also continued to collaborate in efforts to strengthen the early warning system; UNDP supported several actions on advocacy in the implementation of Decree 2124, which regulates the Prevention System and Early Warning for Rapid Response. OHCHR, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Mission conducted field missions to Putumayo, Nariño and Antioquia which informed reports on child recruitment, the presence of dissident FARC-EP groups and forced displacement of the indigenous population.

IV. Mission structures

Mission support

86. The Mission continued to implement the adjustments to its deployment, prompted in part by the dispersal of some former FARC-EP members to new settlements and urban areas, as described in my previous report. During the reporting period, following the closure of its stand-alone camps in the deep-field locations, a number of office premises were completed in hub locations and new areas of operation.

Gender parity strategy

87. The Mission has met its gender parity objectives for 2018, exceeding its 40 per cent target. It projects that, by the end of 2018, it will have approximately 42 per cent female staff of all international, professional and field service staff on fixed-term, continuing and permanent contracts. With regard to other categories of personnel, 59 per cent of United Nations Volunteers are women, 26 per cent of the international observers are women and 47 per cent of all civilian staff are women (including international temporary and national staff).

Safety and security

88. The residual risk levels after the implementation of the security risk management measures remain medium and low. For the reporting period, the incidents affecting United Nations personnel were mostly robberies and vehicular accidents. Indirect threats to the United Nations related to armed conflict and criminality are present in several departments, in a context of fragmentation of illegal armed groups and their positioning in the drug trafficking chain in Arauca, Antioquia, Chocó, Nariño, Norte de Santander and South of Córdoba. The security recommendations in effect since the Hidroituango dam crisis remain in place.

Conduct and discipline

89. The Mission continues to hold regular training sessions for new and existing personnel and participates in the task force of the United Nations system in Colombia on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, additional sessions were organized on mitigating risks of conflict in the workplace.

90. During the reporting period, one new allegation of misconduct was reported to the Mission and three pending cases were closed.

V. Observations

91. As Colombians recently commemorated the second anniversary of the Final Peace Agreement, I commended them on this watershed for the country and for this source of inspiration to peacemakers around the world.

92. The gains of peace are irrefutable. After more than five decades of fighting, insurgents have set aside violence for politics; many are admirably striving today to find their new place in society. Elections have been more peaceful and inclusive. Innovative institutions of transitional justice are up and running, offering hope to the victims. Plans have been crafted through broad participation to extend development and governance to remote, conflict-affected regions where the Colombian State has historically been absent.

93. As I pointed out on the same occasion, a great deal of hard work remains to be done to consolidate the peace. Nothing less than a concerted effort will be required involving the Government and State institutions, political parties, the private sector and civil society, with the accompaniment of the international community. In the growing rejection of violence across Colombian society and in the ever-broader desire of Colombians to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Peace Agreement, there is reason for encouragement that precisely such an effort can be mounted. The Mission, in particular through its presence in the former conflict areas, is witness to a desire to take part in the building of peace that is shared by rural farming communities, victims, civil society and community-based organizations, young people, universities, businesses, women and ethnic peoples.

94. What is equally irrefutable is that peace faces serious obstacles to its consolidation. The greatest concern is the situation of insecurity in a number of areas in the countryside, where social leaders are being killed in alarming numbers; many former FARC-EP members have also fallen victim and the necessary presence of the State has yet to arrive. As this report also makes clear, the reintegration process has been slow to gain traction in many respects. Many former FARC-EP members remain deeply concerned about what they perceive as precarious legal, physical and economic conditions. I commend the perseverance of the vast majority who remain engaged in and firmly committed to the peace process. I regret that polarization around the peace process also continues. National reconciliation remains incipient despite the encouraging beginnings of the transitional justice system, whose autonomy must be respected.

95. All of this speaks to the necessity of accelerating the implementation process, beginning with an urgent response on the part of State institutions to the clamour of communities, of victims and of former combatants in the reintegration process for security, education, health, land, infrastructure and viable alternatives to illegal economies.

96. The challenge is immense. Coordination across all relevant State institutions and the empowerment and full engagement of regional and local authorities will be essential. Civil society should be a full and active participant. While illicit crops and the violence accompanying illegal economies present tremendous challenges, the more than 90,000 families that have signed commitments with the Government on voluntary crop substitution demonstrates that communities aspire to live and support themselves under conditions of legality.

97. The current administration inherited major responsibilities in this regard; it has understandably taken some time to assess the situation and develop its own approach. I commend it for having now devised plans to address a number of the most critical challenges – in particular the "Peace with legality" plan, which promises a wide-ranging and well-articulated effort to secure, stabilize and develop the former conflict areas. I agree fully with its assessment that tackling violence and poverty in these former conflict areas has become a matter of national security. I can only stress how urgent it is to translate these new plans as quickly as possible into effective action that changes the realities on the ground in the areas and for the people most affected by conflict. The dream of a lasting peace in Colombia depends upon it.

98. The United Nations, through the Mission and the United Nations system in Colombia, will be following closely and offering its support to the implementation of such initiatives, as well as the focused efforts of the new Government to inject greater vigour and viability into the socioeconomic reintegration of ex-combatants. We will continue to work with all parties to ensure that they fulfil their obligations within the peace process.

99. I trust that the Security Council will remain similarly engaged. Its united and unequivocal support for the peace process remains an essential factor behind its success – as does the involvement of the wider international community, always in support of a nationally led process.

100. I will remain involved personally and through my Special Representative. Allow me to conclude in this regard by thanking Jean Arnault, as he completes his assignment, for his many outstanding contributions to the peace process in Colombia. Allow me to also express my full confidence that his successor, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, will continue as my Special Representative and Head of the Verification Mission to provide committed and effective United Nations leadership on the ground.